



REVIEW ARTICLE

Life Skills Training: A Nursing Perspective

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Abstract

Collaboration with other medical staff, patients, and family members, as well as the ability to think critically and act quickly are all essential in the nursing profession. The nursing job is demanding, and nurses need the ability to quickly adjust to new circumstances. Most experts think that life skills are most useful when applied to matters of personal health and interpersonal relationships. Skills that help young nurses maintain a healthy mental state and perform competently under pressure are included. Self-awareness, empathetic understanding, creative problem solving, interpersonal relationships, clear and persuasive communication, sound decision making, and the ability to manage stress and emotions are all essential life skills. Having strong life skills is essential for success in the healthcare industry. Being emotionally, mentally, and physically healthy is essential for a nurse's ability to do their job.

Keywords: Life Skills, Decision making, Critical thinking, Nursing

Introduction

A person's life skills are "those abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life," as described by the World Health Organization.¹ According to UNICEF, life skills are "a behaviour change or behaviour development approach designed to address a balance of three areas: knowledge, attitude, and skills." Young people who have acquired these life skills are better equipped to take measures for their own safety, well-being, and interpersonal relationships. Training in fundamental life skills is an activity that helps people become better citizens. It is a chance to learn something about oneself and the world, as well as to see the future more clearly.

Professionally and personally, the nursing programme presents significant challenges. Students in the nursing field have reported experiencing emotional and mental strain. Tools to help student nurses deal with professional and emotional challenges are essential.² Nurses who have received life skills training are better equipped to make well-informed decisions that benefit them in their personal and professional lives. It also promotes mental well-being, and deals with clients, their families, co-workers, and others involved.²

Life skills are categorized into three components by WHO:¹

- a) **Critical thinking skills/Decision-making skills** - It includes problem-solving skills and information-gathering skills.

- b) **Interpersonal/Communication skills** - These include verbal and non-verbal communication, active listening, and the ability to express feelings and give feedback. Negotiation and assertiveness skills managing conflict and empathy.
- c) **Coping and self-management skills** - These include self-esteem, self-awareness, and self-evaluation. Dealing with anger, grief, and anxiety, coping with loss or trauma, stress and time management, positive thinking and relaxation techniques are the key aspects.

Core life skills laid down by WHO and its relevance to nursing¹ (Table 1)

Table 1: Life skills and their relevance to nursing

Life skills	Its Implications on Nursing
Self-awareness	It is the ability to recognize our positive and negative aspects. Nurses should develop healthy and positive self-esteem, and a positive self-image, respect their own choices and decisions, and not be influenced by what others think about them. ³
Empathy	It is the ability to feel and perceive things from another’s perspective. Empathy is important in understanding the experience of patients, their views, and emotions, and in providing care in a non-judgmental way. This leads to better patient satisfaction as there is mutual trust and respect. ⁴
Critical thinking	Critical thinking is a process of analysing a problem, information, or experience objectively. Nurses must think critically while providing care effectively. Critical thinking helps the nurse to identify and plan for patient care, differentiate between facts and opinions and look at situations in an objective biased way. ⁵
Effective communication	Communication is the heart of the nursing profession. During interaction with various healthcare members, patients, and their families, both verbal and non-verbal communication are vital. Active listening, giving advice, and expressing one’s opinion, desire, and needs require effective communication skills. ⁷
Problem solving	It is the ability to identify critical issues and find solutions. Acquiring knowledge to find a solution, and its application in their performance as a professional nurse is vital in nursing for better patient care. It is an intellectual process as it requires creative and reflective thinking. ⁵

Creative thinking	Creative thinking in nursing is the ability to come up with new and innovative ideas or solutions for patient care. It involves asking the right questions, considering multiple options, and using problem-solving skills. It can improve the patient’s condition, reduce hospital days, and readmission. ⁶
Decision making	In a clinical setting, decision-making skills include evaluation of the data, observing the patient's condition, investigating the causative factors, quickly and accurately finding the appropriate option, and applying nursing interventions. Decision-making skills of nursing students are influenced by their training, their confidence, and their relationship with staff and patients. ⁵
Inter-personal relationship skill	Interpersonal relationship skills in nursing are a means of effective communication, collaboration, and conflict resolution. It includes active listening, concise verbal communication, patience and awareness, relationship building, and critical thinking. Nurses interact with clients, families, co-workers, and doctors and these skills help nurses to establish trust, rapport, and cooperation with others. It leads to effective patient care and team-building. ⁷
Coping with stress	Nursing students have high levels of stress and this in turn affects their physical and mental health. Caring for the sick and giving upsetting information to their families takes a toll on nurses. Student nurses should be trained in stress management techniques like reflective thinking, time management, yoga, meditation, and mindfulness to avoid burnout and attrition.
Coping with emotions	It is a skill to recognize one’s own emotions and that of others. It includes the knowledge that, it is normal to have strong positive or negative feelings and the ability to manage one’s emotions like sadness or anger is an important aspect. ⁸ Nursing students should know a healthy way of expressing their emotions.

Research studies related to the outcome of life skills training among student nurses

As they care for patients with emotional issues, undergraduate nursing students experience high levels of stress and mental strain during their mental health nursing clinical placements. Ten undergraduate nursing students were studied using a qualitative descriptive methodology to evaluate their resilience and coping abilities during an internship after completing the CBT-based Decider Life Skills programme. Participants in the

programme noted improvements in their ability to cope with stress and an increased awareness of the importance of caring for their mental health. They stated that they had applied what they learnt from their own experience and during their clinical rotations.²

Because of cultural attitudes and the theory-practice gap, undergraduate nursing students are unhappy with their clinical placements and have low self-esteem and motivation to study. Sixty Iranian nursing students' levels of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to learn, their academic achievements, and sense of self-worth were measured before and after they participated in a life skills training programme, using a quasi-experimental research methodology. The levels of motivation, academic achievement, and self-esteem of the study group all rose significantly. The authors concluded that it is not enough to simply provide educational opportunities; initiatives to improve mental health must also be implemented.⁹

In order to determine how effective life skills training programmes are for the first-year nursing students, researchers Bhuvaneshwari R and Silvia J conducted a real experiment. In total, 257 students from six different Trichy nursing schools (126 in the experimental group and 131 in the control group) were studied. The control group received the standard four-hour treatment, whereas the experimental group received eight sessions of two hours each. The experimental group reported a statistically significant improvement in global life skills after the intervention. The authors proposed introducing "life skills" instruction into nursing school curricula.¹⁰

Before and after participating in a training programme that emphasised problem-based learning and simulation, students' motivation and general life skills were evaluated by Roh YS and Kim SS (2017). Eighty-three second-year nursing undergraduates were randomly selected for an integrated course. Improvements in learner motivation and employability skills like communication, problem solving, and self-directed learning were found in the study. The study authors concluded that, in order to improve nursing students' internal goal orientation, a mixture of simulation and problem-based learning is superior to problem-based learning alone.¹¹

Forty nursing students were studied to determine the course's impact on their general well-being and levels of anxiety through the use of lecture and video. The study used a pre- and post-test design with a single group and

with no controls. Overall health improved dramatically, as evidenced by fewer physical symptoms and less stress. The authors advocated integrating life skills education into school curricula as a means of improving students' physical and mental well-being.¹²

Conclusion

Training in fundamental life skills is an activity that helps people become better citizens. It is a chance to learn something about oneself and the world, as well as to see the future more clearly. Incorporating lessons on stress management, goal setting, and good communication with patients and co-workers would be great additions to the nursing curriculum.

Conflict of Interest

Nil

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